

French Republic ; which imparted the blessings of our free Constitution to the Dissenters ; and which, at a later period, by unparalleled sacrifices and exertions, extended the same blessings to the Roman Catholics. To the Whigs of the seventeenth century we owe it that we have a House of Commons. To the Whigs of the nineteenth century we owe it that the House of Commons has been purified. The abolition of the slave trade, the abolition of colonial slavery, the extension of popular education, the mitigation of the rigour of the penal code, all, all were effected by that party ; and of that party, I repeat, I am a member.¹

One can imagine a Tory's answer to this which would bring out the errors of the Whigs as well as their merits. Admitting that the Whigs were on the whole the progressive party, a Tory might argue that the progress of the Whigs was not always in the right direction. It was that party, he might say, which by attempting in 1640 to overthrow the existing government of the Church of England and to substitute a Presbyterian form of government caused the first Civil War ; and by its aggressive intolerance to all who were not Presbyterians caused the second Civil War, in 1648. It was that party which by its intolerance rendered a settlement in Ireland impossible and which by its fanatical and exaggerated dread of Catholicism and its attempt to place a pretender on the English throne caused

the futile political struggle over the exclusion
bills and the
still more futile Monmouth Rebellion (1678-
85). And
going to the later history of the Whigs he
might point
out that their wiser and more liberal policy
towards America
was offset by the blindness and foolishness of
their views on
foreign policy during the revolutionary and
Napoleonic
wars, and remind the Whigs that if they had
had their way,
Wellington's army would have been
withdrawn from the

¹ The Works of Lord Macanlay (1875), viiL 158-9.